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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 CONAKRY 000299

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SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/27/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [ASEC](#) [GV](#)
SUBJECT: THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONTACT GROUP MEETING ON GUINEA

REF: A. A.CONAKRY 0120
[B. B.CONAKRY 0169](#)
[C. C.CONAKRY 0171](#)

Classified By: CHARGE ELIZABETH RASPOLIC FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. The International Contact Group on Guinea (ICG-G) met for the third time in Conakry on May 4 & 5. The continued gap in electoral financial assistance was discussed in detail as was the creation of the National Transition Council (CNT) which occurred only three days before the ICG-G convened. All participants focused on the Government of Guinea,s (GOG) perceived lack of priorities when allocating what modest funding is available. Nevertheless, the GOG continues to plead that only the international community is capable of completing election funding otherwise the GOG will be unable to meet the already agreed-upon electoral timetable. END SUMMARY

[1](#)2. (C) On May 4 & 5, the ICG-G met for the third time to review what steps had been taken regarding elections, commitments to the Forces Vives, and the security situation in general since the last ICG-G meeting in mid-March (ref C). The meeting was co-chaired by the President of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, and the Minister and Special Envoy of the African Union, Ibrahima Fall. Other Ministerial-level delegates were the Deputy Foreign Minister of Nigeria, the Burkina Faso Minister of Cooperation, and the Director of Legal Affairs within the Liberian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who represented the Mano River Union. The European Union (EU), the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), the Organization of Francophone States (OIF), the United Nations, and Spain. Charge d,Affaires Elizabeth Raspolic represented the United States.

[1](#)3. (C) Prime Minister Kabine Komara welcomed the ICG-G on its third session, stating the Government of Guinea (GoG) was optimistic regarding the ICG-G,s progress. He repeated the oft-heard plea that the GoG continued to rely upon the international community for electoral assistance, emphasizing the synergy between financing and elections. To establish electoral reform, the Prime Minister said the country would require (a) supplemental financial aid; (b) additional equipment for registration of voters, (c) EU assistance via the 10th FED, (d) the elimination of debt owed by the GoG in 2009, and (e) HIPC relief by the end of the year. Upon the Prime Minister,s departure, Dr. Chambas opened the session by declaring the ball was now in the court of the international community. He continues to be optimistic that the legislative and presidential elections can be expected by the end of 2009.

14. (C) Ambassador Said Djinnit, the UNSG,s Special Representative for West Africa, announced a United Nations grant of \$6 million dollars by the UN Peace Building Commission (PBC) for use in security sector reform in Guinea.

(Note: This project apparently was developed during the last year of the Conte regime, but the coup and its subsequent unrest has encouraged the PBC to move its Guinea project to the top of its list. End Note.) Of particular interest to the ICG-G was the announcement that \$500,000 had been designated by the PBC for use in election security assistance.

15. (C) Mr. Greg Jennings, the Head of Electoral Assistance, UNDP/NY, attended the meeting the first day and spoke of the UNSG,s personal interest in Guinea,s elections. According to Jennings, Guinea is one of five pending worldwide electoral sites that are being followed closely by the UN. He also acknowledged that a lack of funding will frustrate all donor nations, good intentions. He stated the UNDP is prepared to reinforce technical support for the electoral process.

16. (C) The EU delegation, headed by Ambassador Harrow Adt, the Special Representative of the EU Presidency for the Mano River Basin, referred to the April 29 review of the Cotonou Accord with respect to the 10th FED regarding Guinea. The consensus was that Guinea had caused some serious violations of EU regulations, that Guinea needed a better, more realistic budget for elections, and that the EU was closely monitoring the electoral process in Guinea. He was

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particularly concerned that the President of the CNDD, Moussa Dadis Camara, had .Qd/ yet publicly renounced any intention of running for office. The result of the 10th FED review will not be known before September.

17. (C) The Minister for Territorial Administration and Political Affairs (MATAP), Dr. Frederic Kolie, joined Ben Sekou Sylla, the Director of the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) in making their expected presentations, each outlining a basic lack of funding as a major obstacle in fulfilling their responsibilities. In response to a question, the MATAP Minister said that a lack of promised funding from the GOG should not be viewed as a lack of commitment. An avalanche of questions from the ICG-G delegates covered everything from the lack of detailed budgets to how the funding gap affects the election schedule, to how the CENI proposes to handle the registration and voting participation of Guineans abroad. The latter question was particularly thorny as MATAP pointed out there has not been a census of Guineans abroad, therefore they can only guess there are between four and ten million citizens who make up the diaspora. The OIC suggested later, in closed session, that the ICG-G recommend the diaspora not be permitted to vote in the legislative and presidential elections as there were insufficient funds and time to conclude a census, and to organize registration and voting abroad. Charge said it would be completely inappropriate for the ICG-G to disenfranchise any citizens of Guinea no matter where they were. If such a decision were to be taken, it would have to come from the GOG and, for the moment, they continue to support the idea of voting by Guineans abroad. The CENI Director said they had suspended registration for one week in April because there were no monies left to pay the registrars, salaries and expenses. A suspension rather than termination was then easier, bureaucratically, to start up again. MATAP again said the rocky road of registration was not due to a lack of political will, but to a lack of funds. CENI expected to complete registration by the end of May and projected electoral card distribution by August/September.

18. (C) Speaking as a representative of the Forces Vives, Mme. Rabiātu Sera Diallo, a prominent union leader, found the ICG-G to be a comfort and source of strength, showing all that Guinea was not a political orphan. Her major concerns were the lack of security in the country for persons and goods. The on-going destruction of privately-owned buildings continues to leave the population ill-at-ease. She asked for a formal information-sharing contact agreement between the Forces Vives, CENI, and MATAP so that relevant information might be shared. She also asked that a permanent contact channel be established between the Forces Vives and the CNDD.

She pointed out the establishment of the National Transition Council (CNT), promised by the end of March, but only announced two days before the opening of the Third Meeting of ICG-G in May, was not shared in advance with the Forces Vives, who learned of its existence from a website. No one, inside or outside the GOG, is sure of the CNT's composition, yet the Forces Vives originally had been led to believe they would play an active role. She pointed out that more than 50 of the 70-odd registered political parties in Guinea are members of the Forces Vives, but the GOG continues to ignore this often lively and vocal coalition. Several requests by the Forces Vives for an audience with either the CNDD or Dadis have gone unanswered. Mme. Rabiātu also questioned that should the CNT someday be up and running, how can it be an independent organization if it remains dependent upon the GOG for funding. For maintaining the independence of the CNT, she looks to the ICG-G.

19. (C) Once again reverting to a closed session, Co-Chairman Fall asked the ICG-G to concentrate on the issue of funding for elections. UN Ambassador Djinnit suggested the time was now for member nations to pay or there would be no elections.

Charge asked if anyone had noticed that CENI's power-point presentation had concluded with a gap of USD 15 million while several independent websites that comment on Guinea's political scene had written the day before of Guinea's rumored purchase of a helicopter to be used by the President of the CNDD and which, oddly enough, was rumored to cost 12.5 million Euros. A lively discussion ensued resulting in our combined suggestion to the two Co-Chairmen that when they later met with Dadis, they raise the issue of how financial priorities are established within this transitional government. Co-Chairman Fall said that he, too, had heard of the helicopter rumor, but that the MATAP Minister had assured

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him it wasn't true. Several delegates later took Fall aside to inform him that MATAP would not be a player in such a decision.

110. (C) Following a pattern established in April, but not well-accepted by the rest of the ICG-G members, the two co-chairmen met that evening with Dadis. Dr. Chambas left town that evening so Co-Chairman Fall met with the ICG-G the next morning. The report back was illuminating for all the wrong reasons. When asked why the GOG had not yet paid its outstanding share of registration costs, Dadis claimed he knew nothing of the debt (despite it having been discussed with him in February and April by the ICG-G and included in the two communiqués, both published in local newspapers.) He then proceeded to tell the Co-Chairs he would arrange to pay it in three tranches, the first of which would be paid immediately. (As of 5/27, the first tranche has not yet been paid.) Dadis told the Co-Chairs the GOG would be happy to pay its debt so that we would continue to help the GOG. In response to the concerns of the Forces Vives regarding the composition of the CNT, Dadis again mentioned the probable need for a Forum to decide who should be on the CNT. This Forum was to be held during the month of May. To date, it has not. Dadis apparently told Fall that neither Dadis nor the Prime Minister would be a candidate for President. Fall and Chambas, therefore, concluded that Dadis is an honest

man.8 Fall said Dadis was obliged to do what he said since, in Africa, when you make a valid commitment, you are hostage to the commitment. When you say something, it binds you. Regarding security concerns, Dadis stated the current insecurity was due to illegal decisions and commitments made by the previous regime. He stated that elections will make the nation more secure as a new National Assembly will be tasked with passing laws that will improve security nationwide. When I asked Fall if anyone could explain just who would participate in the Forum or what its agenda might be, there was no further detail available.

¶11. (C) (COMMENT) Post is continuing to evaluate and re-evaluate the utility of the ICG-G. Sessions Two and Three have provided a lively exchange of ideas among the delegates, but there is no opportunity for open discussion with GOG representatives, other than the MATAP Minister and the CENI Director, neither of whom is in a policy-making position. The Prime Minister appears, delivers his speech in front of the cameras, and disappears without discussing the issues. The ICG-G itself has been excluded from interacting with Dadis or any other member of his immediate staff/advisors/policy makers. Our thoughts are being filtered through the Co-Chairmen, both honorable men, but neither of whom is knowledgeable in depth regarding the local situation. The next ICG-G session is scheduled for June 18-19 in Conakry. (END COMMENT)
RASPOLIC